

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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R 032307Z NOV 76
FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO USDOC WASHDC
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 1516

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 MANAGUA 5136

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: BEXP, EQUIP, ELNT, EWWT, NU
SUBJECT: WTDR/FTI MINISTERIO DE OBRAS PUBLICAS

REF: USDOC 17847

1. NICARAGUA 2. COUNTRY CODE: 219 3. SERIAL NO: NA

4. MINISTERIO DE OBRAS PUBLICAS

4.A. 4B. CODE: A 4C. CODE: X

5. PLANTEL CENTRAL DE CARRETERAS

6. MANAGUA, NICARAGUA

7. ESTABLISHED: NA 8. EMPLOYEES: NA

9. SIZE: NA 10. REPUTATION: NA

11. NA

12. REPORTING DATE: 10/76

13A. 96210/9 MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS
13B. 35310/SF IMPORTER OF CONSTRUCTION MACHINERY
13C. 38110/SF IMPORTER OF ENGINEERING INSTRUMENTS
13D. 37110/SF IMPORTER OF MOTOR VEHICLES.
13E. 30110/SF IMPORTER OF TIRES AND INNER TUBES.
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14. CONTACT: ING. ARMEL GONZALEX TITLE: MINISTER

15. CABLE: NA 16. TELEX: NA 17. PHONE: 43104

18. FINANCIAL REFERENCES NA

19. TRADE REFERENCES: NA

20. FOREIGN FIRMS REPRESENTED: NA

21. A. THE MINISTERIO DE OBRAS PUBLICAS IS THE MINISTRY OF THE NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBLE FOR A VARIETY OF PUBLIC WORKS ACTIVITIES. BY LAW, THE MINISTRY IS IN CHARGE OF THE TECHNICAL PLANNING AND EXECUTION OF ROAD PROJECTS, THE TECHNICAL PLANNING AND EXECUTION OF PORT AND WATER NAVIGATION PROJECTS, THE DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS, AND THE OVERALL PLANNING AND EXECUTION OF PROJECTS RELATED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EAST COAST REGION OF NICARAGUA. ALSO FALLING UNDER THE MINISTRY ARE THE INSTITUTO GEOGRAFICO NACIONAL (NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC INSTITUTE) AND THE INSTITUTO DE INVESTIGACIONES SISMICAS (SEISMIC INSTITUTE); THE FIRST PERFORMS PRIMARILY CARTOGRAPHIC WORK, THE SECOND STUDIES AND MONITORS EARTHQUAKE ACTIVITY IN NICARAGUA. THE MINISTRY IS ORGANIZED INTO FIVE DIVISIONS OR DEPARTMENTS: THE TWO INSTITUTES MENTIONED ABOVE PLUS THE DEPARTMENT OF ROADS, THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS, AND THE DEPARTMENT OF NAVIGATION AND PORTS. IN ADDITION TO THE MINISTER, THERE ARE TWO VICE-MINISTERS: ONE TO ASSIST THE MINISTER IN THE OVERALL ADMINISTRATION OF THE MINISTRY'S PROGRAMS, THE OTHER TO COORDINATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EAST COAST REGION. THE LATTER CARRIES THE TITLE OF VICE MINISTER FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EAST COAST AND EXERCISES HIS DUTIES PRIMARILY THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF NAVIGATION AND PORTS, SINCE THE EAST COAST PROJECTS INVOLVE PRIMARILY CANAL AND PORT PROJECTS. B. IN 1975 THE MINISTRY HAD A BUDGET OF US \$33,862,107, OF WHICH IT ACTUALLY SPENT US\$26,011,645. TOTAL EXPENDITURES WERE DIVIDED AMONG THE FIVE DIVISIONS AS FOLLOWS:

DEPARTMENT OF ROADS \$21,959,525 (84.4 PERCENT)
DEPARTMENT OF NAVIGATION 2,026,617 ((7.8 PERCENT)
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS 847,373 (3.3 PERCENT)
GEOGRAPHIC INSTITUTE 814,373 (3.1 PERCENT)
SEISMIC INSTITUTE 363,758 (1.4 PERCENT)
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AND THE MINISTRY'S TOTAL LABOR FORCE OF 4,458 IS DIVIDED AMONG THE DIVISIONS AS FOLLOWS:

DEPARTMENT OF ROADS 3,531 (79.2 PERCENT)
DEPARTMENT OF NAVIGATION 124 (2.8 PERCENT)
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS 535 (12.0 PERCENT)
GEOGRAPHIC INSTITUTE 252 (5.7 PERCENT)

SEISMIC INSTITUTE 15 (0.3 PERCENT)

C. AS EVIDENCED ABOVE, THE DEPARTMENT OF ROADS, UNDER THE DIRECTION OF ING. ARMANDO JIRON, IS FAR AND AWAY THE LARGEST DEPARTMENT OF THE MINISTRY. THIS DEPARTMENT IS IN CHARGE OF THE CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC ROADS AND HIGHWAYS THROUGHOUT NICARAGUA. IT ACTS AS DIRECT SUPERVISOR FOR PROJECTS TENDERED TO LOCAL AND FOREIGN CONTRACTORS, UNDERTAKES PROJECTS WITH ITS OWN EQUIPMENT AND PERSONNEL, AND MAINTAINS A LARGE PARK OF EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLES FOR REPAIRING AND CONSTRUCTING ROADS. D. THE MINISTRY HAS IN THE PAST PURCHASED ROAD EQUIPMENT FROM A NUMBER OF US SUPPLIERS, SUCH AS FORD EXPORT CORPORATION OF NEWARK, NEW JERSEY, INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER OF CHICAGO, MACK TRUCKS OF ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA, AND CATERPILLAR TRACGOR CO. OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS. THE MINISTRY AND ITS DEPARTMENT OF ROADS PLAN TO PURCHASE OVER US\$40 MILLION OF ROAD-BUILDING EQUIPMENT OVER THE NEXT YEAR TO UPGRADE ITS CURRENT OBSOLETE AND INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT. OF THE \$40 MILLION TOTAL, SOME \$15 MILLION WILL APPARENTLY BE PURCHASED IN SPAIN UNDER A LINE OF CREDIT FROM THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT, AND ABOUT \$1 MILLION IN BRAZIL UNDER A LINE OF CREDIT FROM THE BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT. ANOTHER US\$8 MILLION OF EQUIPMENT WILL BE PURCHASED IN THE US UNDER A RECENTLY-APPROVED EXIMBANK LOAN. PERHAPS ANOTHER \$15 OR \$20 MILLION OF HEAVY EQUIPMENT WILL BE PURCHASED WITH COMMERCIAL CREDIT REPORTEDLY NOW BEING NEGOTIATED WITH CITIBANK. BIDS ON ALL THIS EQUIPMENT ARE ALREADY BEING SOLICITED. THERE HAVE BEEN SERIOUS CONCERNS EXPRESSED ABOUT THE MINISTRY'S ABILITY TO PUT INTO USE SO MUCH NEW EQUIPMENT SO QUICKLY, BUT DESPITE PRIOR ASSURANCES THAT IT WOULD ACQUIRE EQUIPMENT GRADUALLY IT NOW INTENDS TO ACQUIRE ALL THE EQUIPMENT AS RAPIDLY AS IT CAN BE DELIVERED TO NICARAGUA FOLLOWING THE CLOSING OF BIDS AT THE END OF NOVEMBER 1976. FUTURE ROAD BUILDING PROJECTS WILL BE GUIDED BY RECENT STUDIES PREPARED BY FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC CONSULTANTS, INCLUDING THE US CONSULTING FIRMS WILBER SMITH AND ASSOCIATES AND BAKER WIBBERLY INTERNATIONAL, INC.

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THE MINISTRY ALSO HAS SOME MAJOR PROJECTS IN VARIOUS STAGES OF EXECUTION UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE VICE MINISTER FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE EAST COAST, ING. REMY RENER, INCLUDING THE 150-KM. INTER-COASTAL BARGE CANAL AND DEEP-WATER PORTS AT RANA AND LAGUNA DE PERLAS, COMBINED COSTS ARE EXPECTED TO SURPASS US\$70 MILLION. THE MIAMI FIRM LAYNE DREDGING IS CURRENTLY WORKING ON THE SECOND OF FOUR SECTIONS OF THE INTER-COASTAL CANAL UNDER A LOAN FROM THE EXIMBANK TO THE MINISTRY. UP FOR BIDS RIGHT NOW IS THE ENGINEERING WORK FOR THE FINAL TWO PHASES OF THE INTERCOASTAL CANAL. SERIOUS CRITICISM HAS BEEN LEVELED AGAINST THE EAST COAST CANAL AND PORT PROJECTS, BOTH WITH REGARD TO THEIR TECHNICAL AND EXONOMIC FEASIBILITY, BUT THE GOVERNMENT OF NICARAGUA AND THE MINISTRY INTEND TO CONTINUE THE PROJECTS AS SCHEDULED. THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS WILL APPARENTLY PLAN AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NICARAGUA. ITS ROAD BUILDING FUNCTION IS CRUCIAL TO THE FUTURE EXPANSION OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EAST COAST REGION REMAINSHIGH AMONG GON PRIORITIES. THE MINISTRY IS A GOOD CONTACT FOR US FIRMS INTERESTED INSUPPLYING ALL TYPES OF CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES.

22. PREPARED BY: HVANDENBERG
AT: US EMBASSY, MANAGUA.
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